Remarks

IDS

Applicant respectfully submits an IDS conveying a search report from the parallel European application. All of the prior art documents are classified in Category A.

Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1 and 5 are amended to further clarify the features of the claims, without adding new matter. The amendment to claim 15 includes a translation correction regarding the data lines and the control units (see claim 6). Specifically, claim 15 now clarifies that the method according to the invention provides a multiplicity of switchable Ethernet terminals, where a crossbar device (7) has a multiplicity of separate multipole data lines that are connected to switching control units (see amended claim 15).

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-17 are rejected as being anticipated by Nelson.

Applicant respectfully does not understand the Examiner's interpretation of original claim 1 of the present invention. According to Applicant's understanding, original claim 1 defines the arrangement of Figure 1 as it is described throughout the specification of the present invention. Specifically, the first port of the first number of ports is connected to a switching control unit, but not to any port of the second number of ports. The second port of the first number of ports is connected to the first port of the second number of ports, the third port of the first number of ports is connected to the second port of the second number of ports, the fourth port of the first number of ports is connected to the third port of the second number of ports and so on.

Alternatively, the above mentioned features are not disclosed by Nelson. According to Nelson's Figure 2, each port of the first number of ports is connected to each port of the second number of ports.

Further, with regard to Nelson's Figure 2, Nelson clearly discloses that a connection is made within switch 200 from a source port to a destination port and example connections in Figure 2 are illustrated by dashed lines between ports with the arrowhead pointing at the destination port (col. 3, lines 55 to 63). Accordingly, the second port (201a) of the first number of ports is connected not to the first port of the second number of ports, but rather, to the third port (201c) of the second number of ports. The third port (201b) of the first number of ports is connected not to the second port of the second number of ports, but rather, to the fourth port (201e) of the first number of ports, and the sixth port (201f) of the first number of ports is connected not to the fifth port of the second number of ports, but rather, to the fourth port (201e) of the second number of ports.

Moreover (see col. 2, lines 64-66) the control unit 203 is coupled to each port instead of only to the first port of the first number of ports and Applicant cannot find any text passage or figure disclosing that the control unit is connected to an interface device, as argued by the Examiner. In contrast, based on Figures 2 and 3, the control unit 203 is connected only to each port of the switch 200.

Applicant respectfully believes that the amended set of claims with claim 1 being amended should overcome the interpretation the Examiner set forth in present office action.

Regarding claims 2 and 3, as outlined above, there does not seem to be any text or passage or figure showing that Nelson's control unit 203 is connected to an interface device 111, 112, 113 as argued by the Examiner, and the interface device according to claim 2 cannot be the interface device 111, 112, 113.

Furthermore, it is defined that Applicant's interface module (see claim 1) comprises the first port of a first number of ports and that said first port is connected to a switching control unit that is connected to an interface device. Additionally, claim 3 defines that an interface utilization module has to be connected to the interface device, also. Thus, the Examiner's interpretation according to which the server 101 and the hub 109 of Nelson's Figure 1 could be seen as the utilization module of claim 3 is impossible. Such interpretation would lead to Nelson's configuration of an interface module 200 comprising the first port 201a connected to a switching control unit 203, which is connected to an interface device that is additionally connected to the server 101 and the hub 109. This, however, is disclosed neither by Nelson's description nor by Nelson's Figure 1.

Regarding claim 5: Applicant respectfully believes that the Examiner has misinterpreted claim 5. Claim 5 has been amended to clarify the invention and overcome the Examiner's interpretation.

Accordingly, it is disclosed throughout the specification (cf. para. [0014]) and by Figure 1 of the present invention, amended claim 5 now clearly defines that the claimed Ethernet switch comprises a header device (1) and a number of downstream interface modules (2a, 2b, 2c, 2d), wherein the header device (1) includes a crossbar device (7).

This, however, is in contrast to Nelson's disclosure, according to which the said header device (Figure 3 SCC203) is part of the modules (Figure 2, 200) and hence, the modules according to Figure 2, 200 cannot be downstream interface modules with regard to the header device SCC203.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully cannot follow the Examiner's interpretation that, on the one hand, Nelson's unit SCC203 should be the header device according to claim 5, and on the other hand, at the same time, Nelson's unit SCC203 should be the control unit according to claim 5. According to claim 5, these two entities (i.e. the header device and the switching control unit) are unambiguously two different entities. The same applies to claim 7.

Moreover, even with regard to the formulation concerning the connections of the ports of the first number of a series of ports and of the ports of the second number of a series of ports has been adapted for clarification reasons.

Regarding claims 7 and 9, it appears that by trying to read Nelson's document on claims 7 and 9, the assignments of the entities are totally mixed. For example, one time the SCC203 is the header device, another time SCC203 is the switching control unit, another time the SCC203 is the switching control unit within the header device. Furthermore, one time the unit 109 of Nelson's Figure 1 is interpreted as being the interface device, which should be part of the header device (according to claim 7), and another time the unit 109 of Nelson's Figure 1 is interpreted as being the utilization module that should be additionally connected to an interface device (according to claim 9).

Regarding claim 12, Nelson's Figure 3 unambiguously depicts that the crossbar device 302 does not comprise the busy bit logic 307 and hence, the Examiner's interpretation obviously is in contrast to Nelson's disclosure.

Regarding claims 15, 16 and 17, it seems that a translation error has been introduced into claim 15. Claim 15 is amended according to paragraph [0015] of the specification. The cross bar device has data lines and the cross bar device is connected to switching control units. In contrast, Nelson's cross bar 302 is not connected to SCC203, but is a part thereof, and the cross bar 302 does not have the multipole data lines (205, 207, 209) (cf. Nelson's Figure 3).

In claim 16, the term cascade form, according to Applicant's understanding, means that a specific addressing of the respective interface modules is not necessary (cf. para. [0015] of the present specification).

A handling of requests concurrently without there being blocking, however, means that according to Nelson, the requests are processed during a single clock cycle. There is, however, not any hint given that this processing is in a cascade form (cf. Nelson's col. 5, lines 5-40).

Regarding the citation of pertinent prior art (i.e., DiGiorgio et. al. '060; Szcepanek '668; and Dubreuil '193), none of these citations disclose the specific embodiment of interface modules, as may also be seen in Figure 1 of the present application.

Given the above arguments, Applicant respectfully believes that the claims, as amended, are allowable.

Wherefore, further consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully allowed.

A three month extension of time in which to respond to the outstanding office action is respectfully requested. PTO 2038 is authorized to charge a credit card for the prescribed $1,050 three month extension fee. A PTO 2038 is also enclosed authorizing charging a credit card for the prescribed $180 IDS fee.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify under 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage on the date indicated below and is addressed to the Mail Stop Amendment with Fee – Art Unit 2616, PO Box 1450, Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on 12/16/2007.

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